

(b) *Advance payment.* If you have failed to pay previous bills in a timely fashion, or if our initial review of your request indicates that we will charge you fees exceeding \$250, we will require you to pay your past due fees and/or the estimated fees, or a deposit, before we start searching for the records you want. If so, we will let you know promptly upon receiving your request. In such cases, the administrative time limits prescribed in § 5.35 of the part (i.e., ten working days from receipt of initial requests and 20 working days from receipt of appeals from initial denials, plus permissible extensions of these time limits) will begin only after we come to an agreement with you over payment of fees, or decide that fee waiver or reduction is appropriate.

(c) *Billing and payment.* We will normally require you to pay all fees before we furnish the records to you. We may, at our discretion, send you a bill along with or following the furnishing of the records. For example, we may do this if you have a history of prompt payment. We may also, at our discretion, aggregate the charges for certain time periods in order to avoid sending numerous small bills to frequent requesters, or to businesses or agents representing requesters. For example, we might send a bill to such a requester once a month. Fees should be paid in accordance with the instructions furnished by the person who responds to your requests.

§ 5.45 Waiver or reduction of fees.

(a) *Standard.* We will waive or reduce the fees we would otherwise charge if disclosure of the information meets both of the following tests:

- (1) It is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government, and
- (2) It is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

These two tests are explained in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(b) *Public interest.* The disclosure passes the first test only if it furthers the specific public interest of being likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of government

operations or activities, regardless of any other public interest it may further. In analyzing this question, we will consider the following factors.

(1) How, if at all, do the records to be disclosed pertain to the operations or activities of the Federal Government?

(2) Would disclosure of the records reveal any meaningful information about government operations or activities? Can one learn from these records anything about such operations that is not already public knowledge?

(3) Will the disclosure advance the understanding of the general public as distinguished from a narrow segment of interested persons? Under this factor we may consider whether the requester is in a position to contribute to public understanding. For example, we may consider whether the requester has such knowledge or expertise as may be necessary to understand the information, and whether the requester's intended use of the information would be likely to disseminate the information among the public. An unsupported claim to be doing research for a book or article does not demonstrate that likelihood, while such a claim by a representative of the news media is better evidence.

(4) Will the contribution to public understanding be a significant one? Will the public's understanding of the government's operations be substantially greater as a result of the disclosure?

(c) *Not primarily in the requester's commercial interest.* If the disclosure passes the test of furthering the specific public interest described in paragraph (b) of this section, we will determine whether it also furthers the requester's commercial interest and, if so, whether this effect outweighs the advancement of that public interest. In applying this second test, we will consider the following factors:

(1) Would the disclosure further a commercial interest of the requester, or of someone on whose behalf the requester is acting? "Commercial interests" include interests relating to business, trade, and profit. Not only profit-making corporations have commercial

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interests—so do nonprofit corporations, individuals, unions, and other associations. The interest of a representative of the news media in using the information for news dissemination purposes will not be considered a commercial interest.

(2) If disclosure would further a commercial interest of the requester, would that effect outweigh the advancement of the public interest defined in paragraph (b) of this section? Which effect is primary?

(d) *Deciding between waiver and reduction.* If the disclosure passes both tests, we will normally waive fees. However, in some cases we may decide only to reduce the fees. For example, we may do this when disclosure of some but not all of the requested records passes the tests.

(e) *Procedure for requesting a waiver or reduction.* You must make your request for a waiver or reduction at the same time you make your request for records. You should explain why you believe a waiver or reduction is proper under the analysis in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section. Only FOI Officers may make the decision whether to waive, or reduce, the fees. If we do not completely grant your request for a waiver or reduction, the denial letter will designate a review official. You may appeal the denial to that official. In your appeal letter, you should discuss whatever reasons are given in our denial letter. The process prescribed in § 5.34(c) of this part will also apply to these appeals.

Subpart E—Records Available for Public Inspection

§ 5.51 Records available.

(a) *Records of general interest.* We will make the following records of general interest available for your inspection and copying. Before releasing them, however, we may delete the names of people, or information that would identify them, if release would invade their personal privacy to a clearly unwarranted degree. (See § 5.67 of this part.)

(1) Orders and final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions in adjudications, such as Letters of Finding issued by the Office for Civil Rights in civil rights complaints, and

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Social Security Rulings. (See § 5.66 of this part for availability of internal memoranda, including attorney opinions and advice.)

(2) Statements of policy and interpretations that we have adopted but have not published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(3) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect the public. (We will not make available, however, manuals or instructions that reveal investigative or audit procedures as described in §§ 5.63 and 5.68 of this part.)

(b) *Other records.* In addition to such records as those described in paragraph (a) of this section, we will make available to any person a copy of all other agency records, unless we determine that such records should be withheld from disclosure under subsection (b) of the Act and Subpart F of this regulation.

§ 5.52 Indexes of records.

(a) *Inspection and copying.* We will maintain and provide for your inspection and copying current indexes of the records described in § 5.51(a). We will also publish and distribute copies of the indexes unless we announce in the FEDERAL REGISTER that it is unnecessary or impracticable to do so. For assistance in locating indexes maintained in the Department, you may contact the HHS Freedom of Information Officer at the address and telephone number in § 5.31(c).

(b) *Record citation as precedent.* We will not use or cite any record described in § 5.51(a) as a precedent for an action against a person unless we have indexed the record and published it or made it available, or unless the person has timely notice of the record.

Subpart F—Reasons for Withholding Some Records

§ 5.61 General.

Section 552(b) of the Freedom of Information Act contains nine exemptions to the mandatory disclosure of records. We describe these exemptions below and explain how this Department